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## THE SABBATH AND FESTIVALS IN PRE-EXILIC AND EXILIC TIMES

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In order to trace the origin of the Sabbath and the festivals and follow up the stages of their development, we must not consult the codes of law and the meaning attached to the words of the same in later times, but examine certain historical facts in the other narratives and in occasional allusions and draw our conclusions therefrom. By this method of historical-critical research we arrive at an altogether different calendar system in ancient Israel than that with which we are familiar. The Sabbath and the festivals have gone through a process of evolution which we must try to unravel and which few of our historians have made clear. Nor have our Assyriologists succeeded in elucidating this process, especially in regard to the Sabbath, as the recent work of Morris Jastrow, *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions*, and an article of his on 'The Day after the Sabbath' (*AJSL* 30. 94 ff.) seem to show.

### THE SABBATH

To begin with the Sabbath, let me state that we know as yet too little of the Assyrian Sabbath to build important theories concerning the origin of the Jewish Sabbath upon it. The name Shabbatum in the Babylonian calendar has been found by Pinches in a glossary to designate the full moon; hence the Hebrew Sabbath must have had the same meaning, according to Jastrow, Meinhart, and others. On the other hand there was brought to light long ago a Babylonian Elul calendar according to which the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th days were regarded as unlucky days, on which the priest-king was not allowed to officiate as judge, use fire, eat cooked meat, etc.; but the term Sabbath is not applied to these *dies nefasti*. Now, while the older Assyriologists were inclined to identify these days of the Elul calendar with the Hebrew Sabbath (suggesting that the nineteenth day was really the forty-ninth—that is, seven times

seven, counted from the beginning of the previous month), modern Assyriologists no longer lay stress upon this fact, and insist instead upon the other fact that Shabbatum designates exclusively the full moon. Combining with it the etymology of Shabat, which is elsewhere explained by *gamar* ‘to complete,’ they explain the term Shabbatum to be the time of the completion of the moon’s light, ‘when the sun on the other side of the sky casts its full light upon it.’ Prof. Jastrow goes even so far as to explain the Hebrew **ממחרת השבת** to have meant originally the morrow of the full moon, because the Passover feast begins on the 15th of Nisan, assuming the verse in question to belong to two or three different sources. As we shall later see, the whole argument regarding the Passover feast rests on a fundamental error. But aside from that, I do not think that there is any basis or justification whatsoever for identifying the Hebrew Sabbath at any time with the full moon. It seems to me that we are not in a position as yet to assume with any kind of certainty that the Hebrew Sabbath was simply taken over from the Babylonians, at least in historical times. Like all the things Babylonians and Hebrews had in common, the Sabbath seems to me to belong to an older epoch when the Babylonian lore was not as yet developed, and the Hebrew Sabbath may just as well throw light on the Babylonian Shabbatum as *vice versa*. Each had its own process of growth.

This much, however, is certain, that the Hebrew Sabbath is not only older than the Decalogue of the Exodus, which connects it with the Creation week, as does the Elohist in the first chapter of Genesis, but also older than the original form of the Decalogue: **זכור את יום השבת לקדשו**, which refers to the Sabbath as an established and known institution, and is by no means a new commandment. It is, however, quite noteworthy that the older Decalogue of Ex. 34 simply says, **ששׁת ימים תעבד וביום השביעי תשבת**, while the same Sabbath is implied but not mentioned. The chapter on the Manna, Ex. 16, offers indubitably an explanation for the Decalogue expression **זכור את יום השבת** by the narrative’s placing the commandment of the Sabbath before the Sinai Revelation—a point of view which the rabbis present in connection with the words **שם שם לו חק ומשפט** in Ex. 15. 25 (see *Mekilta*, ad loc.).

For us, however, the question is whether the Hebrew Sabbath was from the beginning based upon the fixed institution of the week, which certainly rests on Babylonian astrology, or whether it originally corresponded with the four lunar phases, so that the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth of each month were the days of the moon's 'stand-still,' that is, Sabbath days. The latter view is expressed by Nowack, *Hebr. Arch.* 2 144, who refers also to Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*<sup>2</sup>, p. 107. It seems to me that too little stress has been laid on the important fact that, throughout the entire pre-exilic literature, the Sabbath occupies only the second place alongside of the new moon, which is always mentioned first and foremost as a day of rest and of feasting, of sacrifice and of seeking the word or oracle of the Deity as given through the sacred seer. I refer to the well-known passages, 2 Ki. 4. 23; Am. 8. 5; Hos. 2. 13; Is. 1. 13; 66. 23, where **חֶרֶשׁ** always precedes the Sabbath. Down to the Exile—Ezekiel forms the interesting turning-point, as we shall see later on—the New Moon played a far greater role in ancient Israel than may be inferred from the Mosaic Code, where it is no longer made a day of rest, but has only the character of a survival in the Temple Cult. Note, however, Amos 8. 5, where the people are represented as saying: **מִתְיָעַבְרֵה חֶרֶשׁ שְׁבִירָה וְחַשְׁבָתָה נְפִתְחָה בָּרָךְ**: i. e., they could not sell corn on the New Moon, just as they could not on the Sabbath. Very characteristically we find the day previous to the New Moon, and in distinction from the same, called by Jonathan (1 Sam. 20. 19) **'י֥ם הַמְעָשָׂה** 'Work Day,' which plainly shows the New Moon to have been celebrated by the people as a holy day. The presumption, then, is that the New Moon was the more solemn holy day, given over to feasting and sacrifices of a higher order among the families, such as we find it celebrated in the royal house of Saul and occasionally among certain classes in Israel (1 Sam. 20. 6), over against which the Sabbath days of the month were but, so to say, diminutive moon seasons, four holy days of lesser solemnity and importance. But this very chapter reveals a fact the importance of which has not been recognized by historians. It is the agreement of David and Jonathan to meet again in the field on the third day, that is on the day following the two New

Moon days (20. 5, 12, 19). That they could thus speak beforehand of the two New Moon days as a self-evident matter shows that the New Moon was not celebrated only on the first day of the month, when the reappearance of the moon had been observed by the respective functionaries, but on two days; that is, on the twenty-ninth and thirtieth days of the month, the latter day leading over to the next month, which was counted from the day following as the first day of the first lunar week. We get in this way the following division of the month: four lunar weeks, each ending with the Sabbath, and these twenty-eight days to be followed by the two New Moon days—thirty days altogether. But they occasionally divided the month into decades as did the Egyptians, and as we learn from the term **עשור** and **לחריש**. As a rule, however, the heptad prevailed. The holy number seven belongs to very ancient Semitic traditions, as all the oaths are made among the various Semitic tribes by the number seven. Hence we have the word **נשבע** ‘to swear,’ which means ‘to be bound by the holy seven.’ (Whether the seven planets or Pleiades or some other seven was the object is not as yet ascertained.) The name for week, also **שבוע** (in Jacob’s story: **מלא נא שבוע יאת**, Gen. 29. 27) is certainly old. All the festivities in private and public life filled up a full week, and, strange to say, the Sabbath is never mentioned in this connection. Not even in the story of the siege of Jericho is there any mention of the Sabbath. This can be accounted for only by the assumption that the Sabbath as a separate institution is of a later date.

The new and full moon, however, were celebrated by all Semitic, nay by all primitive, tribes. The Moon was the real Measurer of time, as the Greek or Aryan *μήν* expresses it. Especially for the wandering tribes of the desert the Moon is the guide on the night march. Consequently the Bedouin still hails the appearance of the new moon with shouting, dancing, and clapping of hands, as Doughty describes it in his *Arabia Deserta*. And we learn from Job 31. 27 that the idolatrous practice of throwing kisses at the moon was still practised when that book was written. How much of a recrudescence of this was allowed to come in by the cabballistic writers in the solemn greetings of the Kiddush-Lebanah rite, is not necessary to point out here. At any rate the New Moon celebrations, which were undoubtedly connected

with the Canaanite or Semitic worship of the queen of Heaven, and the round cakes, כּוֹנִים, offered her on the roof-tops of the houses, as we learn from Jer. 44. 17—25, could not but meet with disfavor on the part of the Hebrew legislators. Here we have the reason for the abrogation of the New Moon as a day of rest. Only the priestly tradition retained the New Moon in the cult (Ezek. 45. 17; 46; and Num. 28. 10 f.). The Cabballists, or Mystics, during the late Middle Ages gave dignity to the New Moon, and by a strange atavism, the Jewish women—compare the women in Egypt mentioned by Jeremiah—desisted on that day from doing work. The priest-prophet Ezekiel in his legislative system accords to the New Moon only the second place alongside of the Sabbath (cf. Ezek. 46. 1—3). A still more interesting change which the New Moon has undergone in the writing of Ezekiel, and which henceforth influenced the literature of the Jewish people (Num. 28. 10 and elsewhere) is that the name is changed from חֶרֶשׁ ‘renewal’ into רָאשׁ חֶרֶשׁ ‘beginning of the month,’ and חֶרֶשׁ henceforth stands for month. We shall soon see what this implied for the regulation of the festivals in the Mosaic Code. But we have to turn our attention first to the new concept of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is transformed in the Decalogue from a lunar holy day into a day of the Lord, and made an institution independent of the phases of the moon, a weekly institution, whether for the rest of man, as the Deuteronomic decalogue has it, or as a testimony to God’s creation of the world in a seven-day week, as the decalogue in Exodus has it. The latter idea is, of course, a transformation of the Babylonian myth in the monotheistic spirit. With Ezekiel (20. 20) begins the special accentuation of the Sabbath as a sign between Israel and his God, and hence also the Holiness Code, which emanated from the Ezekiel school, renders it a special sign of the covenant between Israel and the Lord (Ex. 31. 13, 17). In the Priest Code the ancient concepts of the Sabbath as a day of austerity and of the prohibition of labor, of the use of fire, of cooking, etc., made themselves felt again, and this led to ever greater rigidity in the Sadducean and Karaite and then in the Shammaite circles, whereas the Exilic seer in Is. 58. 13 voices a different view regarding the joy and cheer on Sabbath, though wishing to have the day devoted to divine things exclusively. The passage in Jeremiah (17. 19—27)

threatening those that trade on the Sabbath with the conflagration of the city belongs to the time of Nehemiah and ought never to have been assigned to the great prophet.

Before concluding my views on the Sabbath, I wish to call attention to the one fact which the Assyriologists have failed to consider. Had the Sabbath been really known in Babylonia as a holy day outside of the priestly cult, the Biblical Sabbath could never have been made the sign of the covenant, or a mark distinguishing the Jewish people from the rest, as is already done by Deutero-Isaiah and by Ezekiel. The idea of the distinction of Israel from the surrounding nations became the guiding motive in the Mosaic Code also for the festivals, as we shall now see.

#### PESAH

There can hardly be any dispute as to the meaning of **חֶדֶש** 'New Moon,' wherever it occurs in ancient literature. Let me ask, then, when is Passover to take place, according to Deuteronomy? There can be but one translation of 16.1, שְׁמֹר אֶת חֶדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב וְעַשֵּׂת פָּסָח לְיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ כִּי בְּחֶדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב הַצִּיאָךְ 'Observe the New Moon of the Ripening Crops and offer the Paschal sacrifice, for on the New Moon of the Ripening Crops hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt at night.' To translate **חֶדֶשׁ** by 'month' is simply impossible in view of the word **לִילָה** at the end of the verse. In other words, the Passover at the time of King Josiah was celebrated, not on the eve of the 15th, but on the eve of the New Moon. Nor was it, as described in Exodus 12, the sacrificial day of a lamb, but, as we read in the following verse, of all kinds of animals taken from the flock and the cattle. This Deuteronomic precept receives its light from Ex. 13. 1—10, 11—16, where we have the duplicate of the law prescribing consecration of the first-born of man and beast and the sacrifice of the first-born of the beast on the memorial day of the Exodus. There we read also: **הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יִצְאָם בְּחֶדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב** 'This day have you been going out of Egypt on the New Moon of the Ripening Crops.' So also in Ex. 34. 18 and 23. 15 (where the same law is given concerning the Feast of Mazzoth with especial reference to the redemption, or sacrifice of the first-born). There we find also the express statement **כַּאֲשֶׁר צוָּיתִךְ לְמוֹעֵד חֶדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב כִּי בְּחֶדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב**

**צאת מצרים** : ‘On the New Moon of the ripening of the Crops didst thou go out of Egypt.’ By the way, let me say here that that little fragment in Ex. 4. 22—26, **הנה אנכי הרג את בָנֶך בְנֵי בָנְךִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְנֵךְ** ending with the oldest stratum of the Exodus story in connection with the Pesah, connecting the Shepherd Spring feast with the death of the first-born. Originally then the Pesah as a festival of Spring was celebrated on the New Moon of the Spring Month, when the blood of the first-born of the flock or cattle was put on the forehead and hand of the people, and also sprinkled on the door-post and door-sill, a practice that is still in vogue among fellahin natives of Palestine, Syria, and the Arabian peninsula (see Curtiss, *Ursemitische Religion*, p. 206 ff. and Dillmann, ad loc.). The change from the New Moon to the Full Moon is first recorded by the prophet Ezekiel, 45. 21, and then in the priest code, Ex. 12 and Lev. 23, which latter chapter is of composite nature and not a pure product of the Holiness Code. As a matter of fact the Passover feast was only, in consequence of the Deuteronomic Code, transformed from a Shepherd household feast into a national festival under King Josiah (2 Ki. 23. 22), and then connected with the Mazzoth feast.

#### THE FEAST OF WEEKS

Coming to the Feast of Weeks, we observe that it nowhere has a special date as to the month, or day, like the other festivals. It was and remained even during the period of the second temple an agricultural festival, the time of which was determined by the end of the harvest of the barley and wheat crops, which lasted seven weeks. The Deuteronomic Law simply says: ‘Thou shalt count seven weeks’—that is seven times seven days, without a mention of the Sabbath anywhere—‘and then thou shalt celebrate the Feast of Weeks.’ The older code of the Covenant calls it **קציר** adding **בכורי מעשין** **תַּג הַקְצִיר**. Ezekiel does not mention it at all; for **שבעת שביעות** in 45. 21 is a scribal error. But the law in Lev. 23. 9 ff. devotes to it a long paragraph, which has become a matter of dispute not only among priest and sage, Sadducee and Pharisee of olden times, but also among the scholars, Jewish and non-Jewish, to this very day. I refer to the well-known passage in verses 15—17. I hold that no unbiased reader can translate this otherwise than

the Sadducees originally did: ‘Ye shall count from the day following the Sabbath, on which day you bring the Omer of the first barley harvest [of which it expressly says, v. 11, **מְחֹרֶת הַשְׁבָת יְנִפְנוּ הַכֹּהֵן**], seven weeks, and then on the following day, the Morrow of the seventh Sabbath, which is the fiftieth day (Pentecost), ye shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks.’ In other words, then, on the day following the Sabbath when they swung the sickle at the standing corn (which, of course, could not be done on the Sabbath Day), they offered the Omer of the first barley, and on the day following the seventh Sabbath, which is the fiftieth day, they brought the two loaves of bread made from the new wheat as a sacrifice for the Feast of Weeks. What has been lacking in this Biblical Law is a specific date, which was not necessary, as it depended each year on the time of the ripening of the crops. This was good enough for the priests of the Temple, but what about the Jew living far away from the holy land? Should he forego celebrating the Feast of Weeks? It is remarkable that the Book of Jubilees (6. 17 f.; 14. 20—21) takes the name **חג השבועות** to be the feast of the covenant oaths, telling us that the covenant made with Noah, with Abraham, and with Israel on Sinai were all made on the fifteenth of Sivan.

The rabbis, with reference to Ex. 19. 1, point to the giving of the decalogue as the historical event which took place on the sixth, or as R. Jose says in *Shabbath* 86 b, the seventh, of Sivan, **יום מותן תורה—חג הקציר יום שבו נתנה תורה לישראל** (*Shemot R.* 31. 17), taking the term *Kazir* as the spiritual harvest, the day when the Law was given to Israel. Of course, the **חידש השלייש** here also can refer only to the first day, since it says **ביום חזה**. But the rabbis, or rather the Pharisees, wanted to have a close connection made between Pesah and Shabuoth in order to fix the date of the latter, and at the same time give it a historical character, and so they interpreted the words **ממחרת השבת** to mean ‘on the day following the first day of Pesah.’ So already the LXX has it. The first step to this connection between Pesah and the Omer sacrifice was taken at the time when the story of Israel’s entrance into Canaan was told by the people, about which the Book of Joshua tells us that **ממחרת הפסח**, on the Morrow of the Pesah, that is on the fifteenth day of Nisan, the

people ate Mazzoth of the produce of the land, while the Manna ceased. This **ממחרת הפסח** in Joshua could serve as some kind of support to the Pharisees to refer the expression **ממחרת השבעת** of the Omer to the day after the first day of Pesah, while the Karaites and their predecessors, the Boethusians, and the Falashas refer it to the day after the last day of Pesah, so as to bring the Shabuoth festival close to the fifteenth of Sivan (see Jubilees, *l. c.*).

#### THE SUKKOTH FEAST

As to the Sukkoth festival I have long ago come to the conviction, and I now find also Dr. Ehrlich's commentary and Carpenter, quoted by Berthelot, *Leviticus*, p. 79, on my side, that the name has nothing to do with the harvest tents, as most modern exegetes think. There is nowhere such an allusion to harvest tents in the Bible, neither in Deuteronomy, where we might expect it, nor in Exodus 23. 16 or 34. 22, where it is simply called **חג האסיף בצאת השנה** or **תקופת השנה**. As a matter of fact, it was the *Hag*, 'Pilgrimage Feast' *par excellence* (see 1 Ki. 13. 2; 12. 32; Lev. 23. 39—41; Ezek. 45. 23; Neh. 8. 14, and Mishna *R. H.* 1. 2; cf. Nowack, *l. c.* 150). But it is an error to ascribe to the Sukkoth feast, as Nowack does on p. 155, the Deuteronomic law concerning the offering of the first fruits (Deut. 16. 1), as both the Mishnah *Bikkurim* 3. 2 and Philo (Mangey, 2. 298), who calls it 'the feast of the basket,' show that there was no connection between the two. Naturally the pilgrimage feast of the people took place after the summer's work was over, when they could come in large numbers to the temple of Shilo, or Jerusalem, as the Muhammadans come to Mecca for their Hajj. And where would they find a shelter, unless, as is done in Mecca, they would erect tents for all the strangers? This gave the pilgrimage feast the specific name of Feast of Tents. But the priestly legislator was not satisfied with this idea of a simple harvest festival. He was anxious to invest it with historical meaning, and so he connected it also with the story of the Exodus. But how? The usual interpretation is that the words 'I placed you in tents when I brought you out of Egypt' refer to the fact that the people, on their journey from Egypt in the Wilderness, dwelt in tents. But in this case the verse ought to read, **בחוֹצִיאֵי אֹהֶם בָּמְדִכָּר**, not **בָּחוֹצִיאֵי אֹהֶם בָּמְדִכָּר**

**אֹתֶם מִצְרַיִם**. A glance at the history of the Exodus and the list of journeys shows that Sukkoth was the gathering-place of the Hebrews, or the first station of their wanderings (Ex. 12. 37; 13. 20; Num. 33. 5). It matters not whether the name is derived from the tents built there, or whether the name happened to be Sukkoth, just as we learn of Jacob that he gave the name Sukkoth to a place where he built his tents (Gen. 33. 17). The idea is that God provided a place of tents as a gathering-point for the fugitive slaves at their exodus from Egypt. Hence also the controversy between R. Eliezer, R. Akiba, and other Tannaim as to the meaning of Sukkoth, whether it denotes the place of Israel's starting-point at the Exodus, or whether God built for them these tents, or whether He wrapped them in clouds like tents to protect them when He brought them out of Egypt (see *Mekilta* to Ex. 12. 37; 13. 20; *Sifra* to Lev. 23. 43). That the tents in which the wine harvest is celebrated by the people should have given rise to the festival, as is the opinion of the various exegetes (see Dillmann, Berthelot and Driver on Deut. 16. 13, following Robinson, *Bibl. Researches*, 2. 81 f.), has no foundation in the Scripture, as there is nowhere any allusion made to the Sukkoth feasts being celebrated as a wine festival, whereas the pilgrimage tents correspond to the name Hag.

As regards the striking difference which exists between Nehemiah 8. 15, where the law regarding the Sukkoth tents is quoted, and the passage in Lev. 23. 40, I am quite sure that our Code text has undergone a transformation, and that the text in Nehemiah is more authentic. According to the latter the plants mentioned were all used for the cover of the tents and instead of פָרִי the reading was **הַדֶּם** (not 'myrtle,' as Ehrlich thinks, nor can I accept his פָאָרִי 'branches,' instead of פָרִי). The Talmudic authorities have no longer any comprehension of פָרִי עַז הַדֶּר and do all sorts of guessing. Our Ethrog is really the Persian Othrang, which is our orange; while Josephus (*Ant.* 3. 10. 4) and LXX seem to think of a peach instead of a citron. The prophet Zechariah, or rather the author of the fourteenth chapter, which belongs to a very late date, gives us an insight into an altogether different and yet archaic character of the harvest feast of Sukkoth, when he describes it as a feast of rain which is to bring its fertility to those nations who come to Jerusalem for the celebration of the feast, and the

blessing of which is to be withheld from the nations who do not come to bow down before the One and Only God of Israel in Jerusalem. Obviously we have here an ancient water festival, traces of which are found also in Is. 12. 3 and 30. 29. It is called in the Mishnah *Sukkah* (5. 1) *Simhat beth ha-shoebah*, 'Festivity of the House of the Water-drawing.' It consisted of a procession from the Shiloah Spring to the temple made by large crowds following the priest with his chalice of water for the water libation at the altar, and was preceded by dances during the whole night of each day of the Sukkoth festival, amidst the play of instruments and the carrying of torches, in which especially 'the Hasidim and the Wonderworkers' (*anshe maaseh*, probably the Essene 'rain-makers') took a prominent part. It closed with the beating of the willows—*hibbut arabah*—at the close of the feast (*Sukkah* 4. 1—6, cf. Ps. 118. 27). The Sadducean priesthood, however, opposed it (*Sukkah* 4. 9; *Tosefta Sukkah* 3. 1, 16). The ceremony was connected with the belief in the water foundation in the depth of the world's center as placed beneath the Temple mountain of Jerusalem (see *Sukkah* 53 a, b), a belief still shared by the people, Jew and Christian, and it reaches far back in ancient Semitic life, as has been shown by Feuchtwang, *Das Wasseroopfer u. d. verb. Ceremonien*, 1911 (cf. Sepp, *Jerusalem*, Index, s. v. Siloa).

The name Azereth in Lev. 23. 36 and Num. 29. 35 for the last day of the festival gathering seems rather to denote 'Conclusion Feast,' as is shown in Deut. 16. 8, and as Tradition has it, which gave to the Feast of Weeks as the ending of the seven harvest weeks also the name Azereth, Aram. *Azarta* (*Rosh ha-Shanah* 1. 2; *Hagiga* 2. 4; Josephus, *Ant.* 3. 10 b).

These three festivals were adopted from the Canaanites as agricultural feasts, and, no doubt, celebrated originally in the various sacred localities according to the ancient custom, while the annual pilgrimage feast at the end of the agricultural year (Ex. 23. 16; 34. 22) was at an early date made an especial season of gathering at the main Sanctuary of Shiloh (Ju. 21. 19; 1 Sa. 1. 3).

#### THE NEW YEAR'S DAY

The other two festivals ordained in the Priest Code (Lev. 23. 23—32; Num. 29. 1—11) have in my opinion not been satisfac-

torily explained as to their origin and meaning. The priest-prophet Ezekiel seems to have taken cognizance in his festal system (45. 18—25) of the double calendar existing already in ancient Palestine as well as in Babylonia, the agricultural one beginning in the fall (see Ezek. 40. 1) and the sacred or official one beginning in the spring (2 Sam. 11. 1; 1 Ki. 20. 22; Jer. 36. 9, 22). Accordingly he proposed an Expiation for the Temple on the first of the *first* month of the sacred calendar and another on the first of the seventh month (*כשביעי באחד לחודש*). This is the reading restored after LXX by Cornill, Smend, and Wellhausen. As was seen already by Ewald, the Priest Code has, in accepting the agricultural calendar beginning the year in the spring, made it its object to build the whole system of Jewish life on the holiness of the number Seven, according to which the seventh day of the week, the seventh month of the year, and again the year following the seventh time seventh year as the Jubilee year should be holy unto the Lord. Accordingly the New Moon of the seventh month, being the Sabbatical month following the six months of agricultural labor, was, in distinction from the New Moon of any other month, which was always ushered in by the blowing of trumpets (Num. 10. 10), to have a more sonorous blast by the Shofar, and therefore it is called a day of memorial by blowing the horns (Lev. 23. 24; Num. 29. 1), whereas the first day of the first month of the year has nothing specific as the year's beginning. The rite of expiation of the Temple, however, is transferred from the first (on which day Ezekiel has it, 45. 20) to the tenth of the seventh month. The reason for this must be sought in the fact that this was the ancient solar New Year's day, as Ezekiel has it in 10. 1, and because the Jubilee year was according to the later legislation to begin on this day (Lev. 25. 9—10). It was only with the introduction of the Babylonian system of the months that the first of Tishri, which denotes 'the month beginning the year,' *Tasritu* (see now Jastrow's highly interesting article 'Sumerian and Akkadian Views of Beginnings,' *JAOS* 36. 274—299, esp. p. 298, n. 62), became in the Jewish liturgy the New Year's Day, while it was a subject of the controversy between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua of the second century whether on the first of Nisan or of Tishri the creation of the world or of man took place (*Rosh ha-Shanah* 10 b-11 a). Possibly the important event recorded in

Neh. 8. 2 ff. of the introduction of the book of the Law by Ezra at the festal gathering on the first day of the seventh month, marked as especially 'holy,' had some influence on rendering this day a great memorial day for the future. Still the day is characterized there as one of joy and social festivity, not of a serious nature such as the New Year's day became afterwards. Unquestionably, however, it was the old Babylonian New Year's day, celebrated originally in the fall at the beginning of the seventh month Tishri (corresponding also with the seventh month of the Persian calendar named after Mithras), on which Bel Marduk or his predecessor, as the supreme deity of Babylon, sat in the mystic chamber of the fates to determine from the book of life the destiny of mankind for the coming year,<sup>1</sup> which gave the Jewish New Year's day its serious character as the day of divine Judgment on which the Creator and Judge of the world assigns to all men their destiny according to their merits or demerits each year, inscribing the same in His book or books of life, finally to seal it on the Day of Atonement.

#### THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

The great Day of Atonement, celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month, which forms the culminating point of the Temple worship of the year, called like the Sabbath, 'a Sabbath of complete rest,' Lev. 16. 31, has a unique character among the Jewish festivals. While obviously unknown as yet in Ezra's time (Neh. 8), not to speak of the Solomonic time (1 Ki. 8. 65), it soon became during the second Temple '*the great Day*' of the year and afterwards the most solemn holy day of the Synagogue. To account for its origin and meaning it is not sufficient to point to Ezekiel's proposed system, according to which the first day of the seventh month was like that of the first month to be a day of expiation of man's sin and of atonement for the temple (Ezek. 45. 20), and simply to assume that the author of the Priest Code transferred it to the tenth day in order to have the New Moon of the Sabbatical month stand out as distinguished from the other New Moons of the year. We have also to consider

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<sup>1</sup> See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 67—69, especially p. 68; Schrader-Zimmern, *KAT.* p. 402 f., 514 f.; Alfred Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, p. 43, 357, note 3.

the fact that the tenth of Tishri is called by Ezekiel (40. 1) 'the beginning of the year,' and that the Jubilee year was actually to be proclaimed by the blowing of the horn as holy on the Atonement day, the tenth of the seventh month, which implies that the year began on that very day (Lev. 25. 9—10). It is obviously the solar year, in contradistinction to the lunar year, the beginning of which was to be marked according to the system recognized also in the story of the Flood (see Gen. 8—9, cf. 7. 11), where the difference is also one of ten days.

Here, then, the question arises whether it is likely that the strange rites prescribed in Lev. 16, which placed the Azazel, the demon of the wilderness, in some sort of opposition to Yahweh, the Only One God of Israel, were introduced as an innovation during the second temple at a time when the religious spirit of the people and the priesthood was scarcely susceptible any more to the worship of the goat-like deities, the *Seirim* (= satyrs) against which ch. 17. 7 warns. It was Ibn Ezra in his commentary to Lev. 16. 8 who saw the relation of the Azazel to these demons 'of the field.' But we know from the book of Enoch, written in the second pre-Christian century, what an important role among the demons Azazel played. The Masoretic writing עזאל was introduced to give the name עזאל as found in Mandaean, Sabaeian, and Arabian mythology (Norberg, *Onomasticon*, p. 31, Brand, *Mandaeische Theologie*, p. 197 f.) the meaning of a 'rugged place,' (*Sifra ad loc.*; *Yoma* 67 b) instead of a 'wilderness deity.' The very spot in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, the sharp rocks (Beth Hadude) where the scapegoat was to be cast down to Azazel according to the Mosaic Code (*Yoma* 6. 8), was regarded as the place where the demon was cast down by the angel Raphael there to remain shackled in the darkness until Judgment Day (*Enoch* 10. 4—5; see Charles, *ad loc.*). In other words, Azazel was in the popular belief the head of the demons whose dwelling was in the wilderness around Jerusalem. The sending out of the scapegoat to him laden with the sins of the people was originally, then, the cleansing of the people of all impurity in order to secure their welfare for the year just begun. It was an ancient rite dating from primitive time, to be compared with the rite concerning leprosy (Lev. 14. 7), which has its analogies also in Babylonian rites (see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 461), and in all likelihood the

festal dance of the maidens on the hills of Jerusalem assigned in the Mishnah *Taanit* 4. 8 to the Atonement day and the fifteenth of Ab (August), reminding one very much of the dance of the maidens at the sanctuary of Shilo (Ju. 21. 21), was connected with the celebration of the solar New Year's day (cf. Morgenstern *JAOS* 36. 324 f.). The signals informing the people of the arrival of the scapegoat at its destination, the Azazel rock (*Yoma* 6. 8), seem to have been the inducement to open the dance on the hills.

Now it is rather strange that the date for the Atonement Day is not given at the beginning of the chapter, but in v. 29, which together with v. 30—31 did not belong to the original text. Possibly the whole law underwent changes as to date and contents. As a matter of fact the chapter is composed of many sources, as was shown by Benzinger and others (see Berthelot and Driver ad loc.). From a popular New Year festival it was transformed by the author of the Priest Code into a day of great pontifical function, and the final redactor of Leviticus in inserting v. 29—31 rendered it a Day of Atonement for the people. Later on the Pharisees invested it with a still higher or holier character in rendering it a day of prayers for repentance as well as fasting, a day of divine mercy on which the thirteen attributes of God (Ex. 34. 6—7) revealed to Moses were brought home to the people as assurance of the divine forgiveness. They went even so far as to refer the words: *Ki bayom hazeḥ yekapper*, ‘on this day he shall atone,’ not to the priest but to God, who shall, through the day, have atonement for the people (*Sifra* to v. 30). Thus the whole idea of sacrificial worship on the Atonement Day, on which the Epistle to the Hebrews (c. 9) and Barnabas (c. 7) base their doctrine of Christ as the world’s Atoning High Priest, was replaced by the prayers and litanies of the ‘great day.’